DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 270 434 SP 027 699

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TITLE Legislative Implications--Professional Self-Governance and Career Ladder Concepts.
PUB DATE 25 Feb 86
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (Atlanta, GA, February 22-26, 1986).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Standards; *Career Ladders; *Educational Legislation; *Governance; Higher Education; Incentives; *Professional Autonomy

ABSTRACT

Members of the teaching profession have been assuming more responsibility for their own work and seeking professional self-governance. Legislation enacted by at least 33 states has legalized the rights of professionals to take part in making decisions about requirements for entering the teaching profession, as well as improving the performance of those who remain in the profession. This enabling legislation has, in most cases, provided for delegation of some of the state's responsibilities for education to bodies of practicing teachers. Most state educational reform legislation includes incentive programs for teachers. This paper reports on the progress of a study that documents the status of legislation which provides for career ladder incentives for teachers, and the role of existing self-governing bodies in this process. The study design incorporates: (1) a systematic review of enabling legislation on a state by state basis; (2) documentation of career ladder provisions in current legislation and the role of existing self-governing bodies in this process; and (3) analysis of perceived effectiveness of career ladder initiatives by governance body members, state departments of education, teacher educators, state teacher associations, and classroom teachers. While the study has yet to be completed, 10 trends in career ladder plans are identified. (JD)

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Legislative Implications--
Professional Self-Governance and
Career Ladder Concepts

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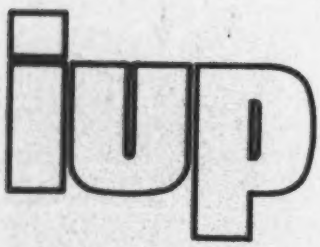

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LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS--PROFESSIONAL SELF-GOVERNANCE AND CAREER LADDER CONCEPTS

PRESENTATION

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

by

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February 25, 1986

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LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS--PROFESSIONAL

SELF-GOVERNANCE AND CAREER LADDER CONCEPTS

The recent reports on American education have highlighted a number of indicators of developing problems in the teaching profession. Beginning teachers have fewer academic strengths than their predecessors of only a decade ago. There is evidence that excellent teachers are increasingly being attracted by careers in more lucrative and possibly more satisfying fields.

Since the early 1970's educators have pressed for the passage of legislation creating professional self-governing bodies. Members of the teaching profession have been assuming more responsibility for their own work and seeking what is called professional self governance. The National Education Association believes the education profession must be accountable for achieving and maintaining high standards for entry and that each state should have a professional standards and practices board or commission that has authority for approval of preparation programs and for the certification of teachers (1983). Legislation enacted by at least thirty-three states has legalized the rights to take part in making decisions about requirements for entering the teaching profession as well as improving the performance of those who remain in the profession. This enabling legislation has in most cases provided for delegation of some of the state's responsibilities for education to bodies

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of practicing teachers. Legislation enacted to create self-governing bodies has enabled the teaching profession to have the right to establish and administer its own internal standards relating to: (1) the initial licensing and advanced credentialing of all education personnel; (2) accreditation of institutions and programs of teacher education, including undergraduate, graduate, and in-service programs; (3) the creation and adoption of rules of procedure in accordance with established concepts of due process; (4) protecting and guaranteeing the competent performance of members of the profession; and (5) establishing the means of determining adequate conditions of learning and teaching.

An underlying premise of governance legislation is that a distinction is drawn between the control of education and the governance of the teaching profession. Thus, legislation enacted to create the establishment of governing bodies for the teaching profession has generally established the necessary checks and balances to protect public interest as well as generate and disseminate the power of the teaching profession.

While legislation enacted provided, in some measure, for the profession to upgrade the competent performance of teachers, there is reason to believe that self-governing bodies created by state legislation have not realized their full potential. Control of teacher preparation is scattered at best. Educators and the states continue a tug-of-war

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over governance of the profession. As things stand now, no one is truly held accountable for the quality of the new teacher (National Education Association, 1985). Thus, the teaching profession continues to be the center of controversy between political leaders and educators. In response to the perceived problems, states, local school districts, professional associations, postsecondary education institutions, and the private sector have advanced a wide array of creative initiatives to improve the teaching profession. These efforts--many through legislative action--include merit pay plans, career ladder staffing, master teacher programs, new certification requirements, competency testing of teachers or candidates for teaching jobs, and new approaches to staff evaluation and inservice training.

Little knowledge is available from research to illuminate the dimensions and sources of these problems and to assist policymakers in developing and implementing solutions. Although a body of literature exists about why teachers leave or remain in the classroom, it has not been updated to accomodate recent economic, sociological, and political changes which now influence the life of a teacher. We know little about why people enter or leave the profession. However, people choose professions for many reasons including security, self-esteem, satisfaction, and high pay. People who avoid teaching as a career cite low pay and low prestige as factors (National Association of

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Secondary School Principals, 1984). Little is known about the factors that engender high or low levels of teachers performance. Most legislation, either enacted or under consideration, is based on assumptions about what motivates teachers to teach and to teach well.

While the recent reports on American education have addressed a varity of issues, this study focuses on the career ladder concept. Most state educational reform legislation during the last year includes incentive programs for teachers. The idea is to provide upward mobility in teaching in a series of steps each requiring a greater degree of competence and responsibility (Association of Teacher Education, 1985). All have one common purpose, that of rewarding teachers and providing incentives to enter and remain in the profession. A number of éducators have endorsed the concept of career ladders. Hierarchically structuring teams which include staff teachers and lead teachers has been suggested by Gideonse (1982). A three stage career ladder, with teachers at the top stage earning as much as administrators has been proposed by Woodring (1983). Schlechtly and Vance, (1983) have proposed that the career structure of teaching in public schools be redesigned to include high-status roles that give classroom teachers with competence, committment, and education, responsibility for training other teachers and conducting research and development. Goodlad, (1984) spells out a

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complete system for differentiating staffing. All of these plans suggest a system of differentiated staffing.

This study documents the status of legislation which provides for career ladder incentives for teachers and the role of existing self-governing bodies in this process. The design incorporates:

1. The systematic review of enabling legislation on state by state basis.

2. The documentation of career ladder provisions in current legislation and the role of existing self-governing bodies in this process.

3. The analysis of perceived effectiveness of career ladder initiatives by (a) governance body members; (b) state departments of education; (c) teacher educators; (d) state teacher association leaders; and (e) classroom teachers.

A review of the literature was conducted. Data obtained from the analysis of legislation, and structured interviews via telephone were compiled and analyzed.

Led by the governors of the respective states, political intervention into education has become more pervasive since the release of the report by the national commission's report, A Nation At Risk. This attention is unsurpassed in the history of education in America and is attributable to the influence of the media with education continuing to be a major focus of interest nearly two years after the report was published. This public interest coupled with the decision of the Reagan Administration not to become directly involved in the reform movement has set the stage for expanded influence from the state level. Commissions have

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been appointed to study and make recommendations relative to the condition of education within the respective states. Many of the governors are presenting themselves as the champion of education--typically recommending salary increases, upgrading requirments for entrance into and graduation from teacher training programs, improved forms of teacher evaluation, additional funds for instruction, improved business-education partnerships, and various provisions for career ladders. According to a survey by the Southern Regional Education Board, in excess of forty states have begun to develop or pilot some type of career ladder plan for education (Cornett, 1984). This is confirmed by a survey conducted by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, United States Deptartment of Education, and reported in the Nation Responds published in May 1984. Whether the career ladder proposals are designed for state or local implementation, the direction is originating from the state and consequently local school districts should expect continued state involvement as implementation is effected. Many of the proposals presented at this level are identified as a top priority for the current legislative session with the promise that the legislation can be implemented without tax increases. The governor of one state estimates that economic growth will provide in excess of $500 million in new revenue for the state's education trust fund between 1985 and 1990 (Olson, 1985).

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Reactions to career ladder proposals by teacher unions and school board associations have been mixed. Where the proposals have been embraced by the respective organizations, their representatives have identified potential for the improvement of education and a willingness to compromise previously held positions. Teacher unions have opposed such plans where threats to previous gains have been perceived. School board organizations have opposed career ladder plans when teachers were perceived as having too much control in the development or as a result of the proposal. Governor Anthony Earl of Wisconsin recently admonished local school boards to re-prioritize their goals by aligning important efforts to enhance education statewide ahead of the tradition of local control (Bridgman, 1984).

Career ladder proposals must be carefully prepared and well planned to assure a reasonable probability of success. Florida might be offered as an example where this did not occur. While the Florida experience is designated as a merit school plan rather than a career ladder for educators, the lessons are none-the-less pertinent. The Florida legislature designated $20 million to be apportioned between schools identified as meritorious and those needing incentive to improve. While original response was mixed, both major teacher unions eventually filed suit to block the program. Each has charged unfair distributioin of funds and violations of collective bargaining laws. While supporting the concept of career ladders, union leaders identify the

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Florida plan as a glorified bonus. The Florida plan serves as a learning experience for all interested in career ladders. Unionization is of minor significance to the issues involved. Originators of significant innovations in education must involve representatives of professional employees and other groups which will be affected. Local officials in approximately half of the states' school districts have refused to participate in the program indicating that yet another important group was not successfully included in the drafting and final development of a program of major educational significance. State department of education officials attempt to rationalize their failure to adequately involve teacher representatives, school administrators and school board members in the merit plan by suggesting that controversy historically surrounds merit-school programs and consequently is healthy (Tugend, 1984).

Career ladders may be the long awaited innovation that will enable education to fully achieve the status of a profession while attracting and keeping the most competent teachers. As reported in the September 26, 1984, issue of Education Week and contrary to the Florida experience, educators will endorse such a plan. The Educational Research Service, an independent nonprofit organization, conducted a survey in which 92 percent of principals and in excess of 81 percent of teachers responding either agreed or tended to agree with the career ladder concept.

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Governor Lamar Alexander of Tennessee proposed a Master Teacher Plan incorporating a career ladder concept. According to Alexander, "career ladders will be steep enough that reaching the top will be attractive to the superior performer who might be attracted to a dozen other fields and new prestige will be as important as new pay (Alexander, 1984)." More than 92 percent of the eligible teachers and administrators applied for participation. The governor committed valuable resources to promoting the master teacher plan as part of a comprehensive school improvement plan. Aware of the importance of establishing and maintaining support from various special interest groups, the governor directed much of his time and that of his staff to the effort. Lobbying groups were established, selected groups-including but not limited to teachers-received brochures, newspaper clippings, and newsletters.

While the governor made extensive efforts to inform teachers of the plan, he did not seek the input of teacher representatives during the developmental stages. The Tennessee Education Association objected to a number of provisions including areas impacting on job security such as salary base, tenure, negotiations, evaluation procedures, promotion quotas, political influence, adequate funding, and provisions for teacher and administrator input into the program's development and implementation. The Association drafted a separate version of the bill and a compromise position was eventually developed. This further points out

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the importance of including representatives of special interest groups in the initial planning stages of proposals intended to bring major educational innovations. Efforts to enforce the plan on the profession through an extensive publicity campaign without consultation with and input from the groups to be affected, resulted in a delay of more than one year in the passage of the legislation prerequisite to the implementation of the plan. During that period the publicity campaign continued simultaneously with negotiations between the governor's staff and the association.

The Select Committee on Education consisting of senators and representatives proposed the Comprehensive Reform Act of 1984 which included a teacher career ladder program. The governor called a special session of the legislature to address the issue. The Senate committee structure was revised so that only two standing committees remained, The Education Committee and The Finance Ways and Means Committee. After weeks of debate and compromise, the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 became law.

Including the initial probationary year, there are five rungs in the Tennessee career ladder for teachers. Salary supplements are provided at each level with salary incentives ranging up to $7000 for teachers at the top rung working 12 months (University of Tennessee, 1984).

The chart on page twelve is provided as a career ladder model. While this model was devised for demonstration

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purposes, components may be in place in exisiting or planned career ladders. Movement up and down the career ladder is intended to improve the quality of education. This model provides a skeletal structure for movement up the ladder. However, if complacency is to be removed from the options available to teachers, the standard necessary to obtain a promotion must be maintained throughout one's career. In the event that a teacher remains at a given level (Teacher III included) for a predetermined period of years, continued competency to maintain that level must be demonstrated. Where a teacher fails to demonstrate said competency, additional training would be available. If success is lacking even after the training, the individual would move to the next lower rung on the ladder. The options available at this point in time would include reapplication for promotion or the rational decision to remain at that level. After the predetermined period of time, this individual would be required to demonstrate competency to maintain that level also. Where tenure is a factor, it may be necessary to include a level between probationary and teacher I.

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MODEL CAREER LADDER

LEVEL	PROVISIONS
Probationary	- 1 year - instructs students - training given - satisfactory rating
Teacher I	- advance from probationary - salary increase - instructs students - additional responsibility - remain until application for promotion - training provided - evaluation
Teacher II	- advance from teacher I - salary increase - instructs students - additional responsibility - train probationary and teacher I employees - serve on curriculum committees - remain until application for promotion - additional training given - evaluation
Teacher III (Career Teacher) (Master Teacher)	- advance from teacher II - salary increase - instructs students - additional responsibility - staff development - curriculum development - inservice in and out of school district - conduct research - teacher evaluation for promotion

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Decisions must be made on a case by case basis relative to original implementation. It may be desirable to examine credentials of existing employees who wish to be evaluated for initial promotion to upper levels of the career ladder. A similar provision may be desirable for fast-tracking veteran teachers recruited from outside the district even after the program is in place. However, all other new teachers would be required to climb the ladder one rung at a time.

Evaluation for purposes of vertical movement must be approached very carefully. Said evaluation must not be related to continued employment if cooperation is to be expected from teacher representatives. The concept has the greatest chance for success in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Where teachers distrust administrators and perhaps even their own representatives or where administrators and school directors lack confidence in the teaching staff, a career ladder plan is unlikely to find success.

The narrative given above is intended to provide a skeletal description of a carrer ladder for teachers. Some major concerns are addressed but many additional components must be included in a plan intended for implementation. Additionally, the descriptions provided for the respective levels should specify additional provisions and include greater detail.

Most of the assumptions surrounding the career ladder concept contained in current legislative packages are based

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upon untested research. Because these assumptions are untested, research will contribute new data to our current knowledge thus enabling an examination of the relationship between already established self-governing bodies and the new career ladder concepts. Teacher education faculty, state department of education staff members, professional association leaders, and local school district administrators and board members will find the results of this study of vital assistance in analyzing, implementing, or otherwise dealing with career ladders or similar innovations.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY (TO DATE)

The information collected to date was obtained from state departments of education, governance body personnel, and state education association leaders. The ten state sample which includes Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Wisconsin was purposefully selected based upon the existence of active governance bodies as identified in the NEA publication entitled Standards and Certification Bodies in the Teaching Profession.

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While the study is not complete at this time, several trends are evident:

1. Most career ladder plans originate from the respective state governor's office or legislature.

2. The respective sponsors have excluded the state departments of education from participation in the development of career ladder legislation.

3. Where career ladder plans have been implemented, the sponsors perceive them as being effective. Where such proposals are in the planning stages, the sponsors are convinced that their effectiveness is eminent.

4. Existing career ladder plans are either mandated state wide through legislation or are encouraged to be developed at the local level with state funding.

5. While encouraging the development of career ladder plans, state legislatures have not committed adequate funding.

6. Governance bodies have not been proactive in the development of career ladder proposals. With deference to political implications, a neutral posture has been maintained.

7. Executive directors or secretaries of governance bodies are generally employees of state departments of education and thus may exert influence over the activities of the respective bodies.

8. State teacher associations have generally opposed career ladder plans proposed by political leaders.

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9. While statewide career ladder plans are being implemented in some states, most career ladder plans are developed in local school districts and submitted for state approval and funding. A major weakness of this process is a lack of funds to support the implementation of the proposed programs.

10. Many states are doing nothing relative to the development of career ladders but are involve in other initiatives designed to improve education.

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